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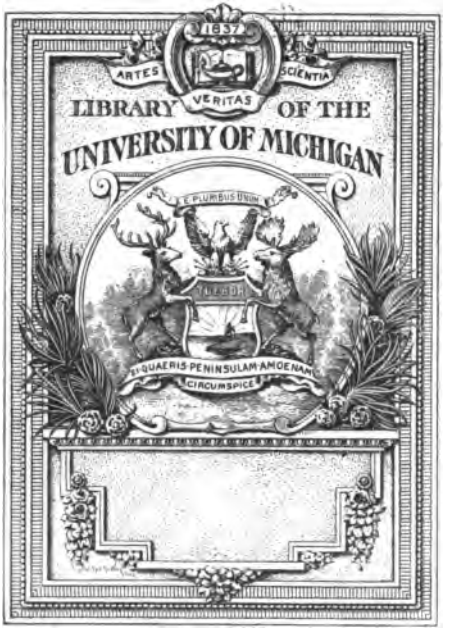
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A WARNING TO LOVERS

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A WARNING TO LOVERS

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"SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE IS SAUCE FOR THE GANDER"

By

PAUL LEICESTER FORD

AUTHOR OF
"JANICE MEREDITH"
"WANTED, A MATCHMAKER," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
HENRY HUTT
AND DECORATIONS BY
T. M. CLELAND

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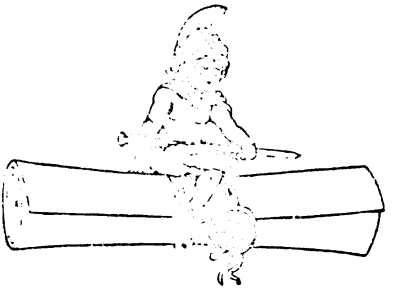

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A WARNING TO LOVERS

A WARNING TO LOVERS

BEFORE some blazing logs, which fill a deep fireplace with warmth that overflows to just the right extent into the room, stands, slightly skewed, a sofa. The sofa is a comfortable one. It is short, deep, and low; and the arms have a suggestion of longing to be filled that is truly

seductive. In addition, two down cushions imply that the sofa is quite prepared to fit itself to any figure, be it long, short, broad, or narrow. Altogether, it is a most satisfactory sofa.

But the satisfactoriness does not end here. Seated at one end of that sofa is a girl, clearly in that neither grass nor hay period, which begins at sixteen and ends at eighteen. Not that it is intended to suggest that because the girl is neither hay nor grass she is unattractive. Quite the

reverse. New-mown hay is the sweetest, and the girl, if neither child nor woman, is, in her way, just as sweet.

In algebra, when *a*, *b*, and *c* are computed, it is possible to find the unknown quantity *x*. Applying an algebraic formula to the above, we at once deduce what is necessary to complete the factors. It may be stated thus: *a*, a sofa, plus *b*, a charming girl, and as *a*, a sofa, must be divided by two, we find the unknown quantity to be *x*, a

man, and the product of our a, b, and x to equal xxx, or triple bliss. Nor is this wrong. The sofa does not do more than seat two people comfortably, yet at the present moment there are little spaces at both ends. Concerning the other details of this $a \div 2 + b + x - o$ (*i. e.* Mrs. Grundy), it seems needless to enlarge.

"And isn't it wonderful, Freddy, that you should love me and I should love you?" cooed the girl.

"Just out of sight," replied Freddy.

Most people would agree with the above remarks, though the circumstance of a man and woman occasionally loving each other is a phenomenon recognised, if not approved, by science. But though these two did not know it, there was a wonder here. Freddy has been spoken of in the masculine gender, because, as Shakespeare wrote: "The Lord made him, therefore let him pass for a man." Other-

wise his manliness was open to debate. Lovable the girl unquestionably was, or at least very fast verging upon it, but it passeth human intelligence how Freddy could inspire any sort of feeling except an intense longing for a gun loaded with goose-shot.

"And that we should have loved each other for so long, and never either of us dreamed that we cared one little bit for each other," continued the girl.

Freddy did not assent to this sentiment as readily as to the

former. Freddy had been quite sure that Frances had been pining for his love in secret for some months. So he only remarked: "We got there all the same."

"Yes," assented Frances. "And we'll love each other always, now."

"But I say," inquired Freddy, "what do you think your father and mother will say?"

"Why, they'll be delighted," cried the girl. "It could n't be better. Cousins, — and just the same age — and, and — Oh,

lots of other reasons, I'm sure, but I can't think of them now."

"Let's tell them together," suggested Freddy, courageously.

"Freddy! Of course not. That isn't the right way. No, you must request an interview with papa in his library, and plead eloquently with him."

"I suppose I must," answered Freddy, with a noticeable limpness in his voice and vertebræ.

"Wouldn't it be fun if he should refuse his consent!" exclaimed the girl.

Freddy did not recognise the comical quality. "I don't see it," he moaned.

"Why, it would be so romantic! He would of course order you to leave the house, and never, never darken his doors again. That's what the father always does."

"You think that's fun?"

"Such fun! Then, of course, we should have to arrange for romantic meetings, and secret interviews, and you would write little letters and put them in a

prayer-book in our pew; and watch to get a glimpse of me as I go in and out of places; and stand on the opposite side of the street each night, till you saw the light in my room put out. Oh! What fun it will be!"

"It might be raining," complained Freddy.

"All the better. That would prove your devotion. Don't you love me enough to do that?"

"Yes," said Freddy, meekly, "but I hate getting wet. Sometimes one catches a nasty cold."

A WARNING TO LOVERS

"Any one who tells a girl he loves her with a fervour and passion never yet equalled by man should not think of such things," asserted Frances, disapprovingly.

Freddy had an idea that a girl who reciprocated such a passion should not seem so happy over the prospect of her lover undergoing the exposure, but the youth did not know how to express it. So he proposed: "Let's keep it a secret for the present."

"Let's," assented Frances.

"We won't tell any one for a long time, but just have it all to ourselves. And when I am riding in the morning you must join me; the groom will think it's all right. And whenever papa and mama are to be out in the evening, I'll put a lamp in my window, and—"

Ting!

It seemed as if some of the electric current which made that distant muffled ring had switched and passed through the happy pair. Both started guiltily, and

then both listened with the greatest intentness; so intensely, that after a moment's pause they could hear the soft gliding sound of the footman's list slippers as they travelled down the hallway; could hear the click of the lock as he opened the front door; could hear the murmur of voices; could hear the door closed. Then, after a moment's silence, a voice, for the first time articulate to them, said: "I'll wait in the morning-room."

"Freddy," gasped the girl,

"it's that horrid Mr. Potter. Quick!"

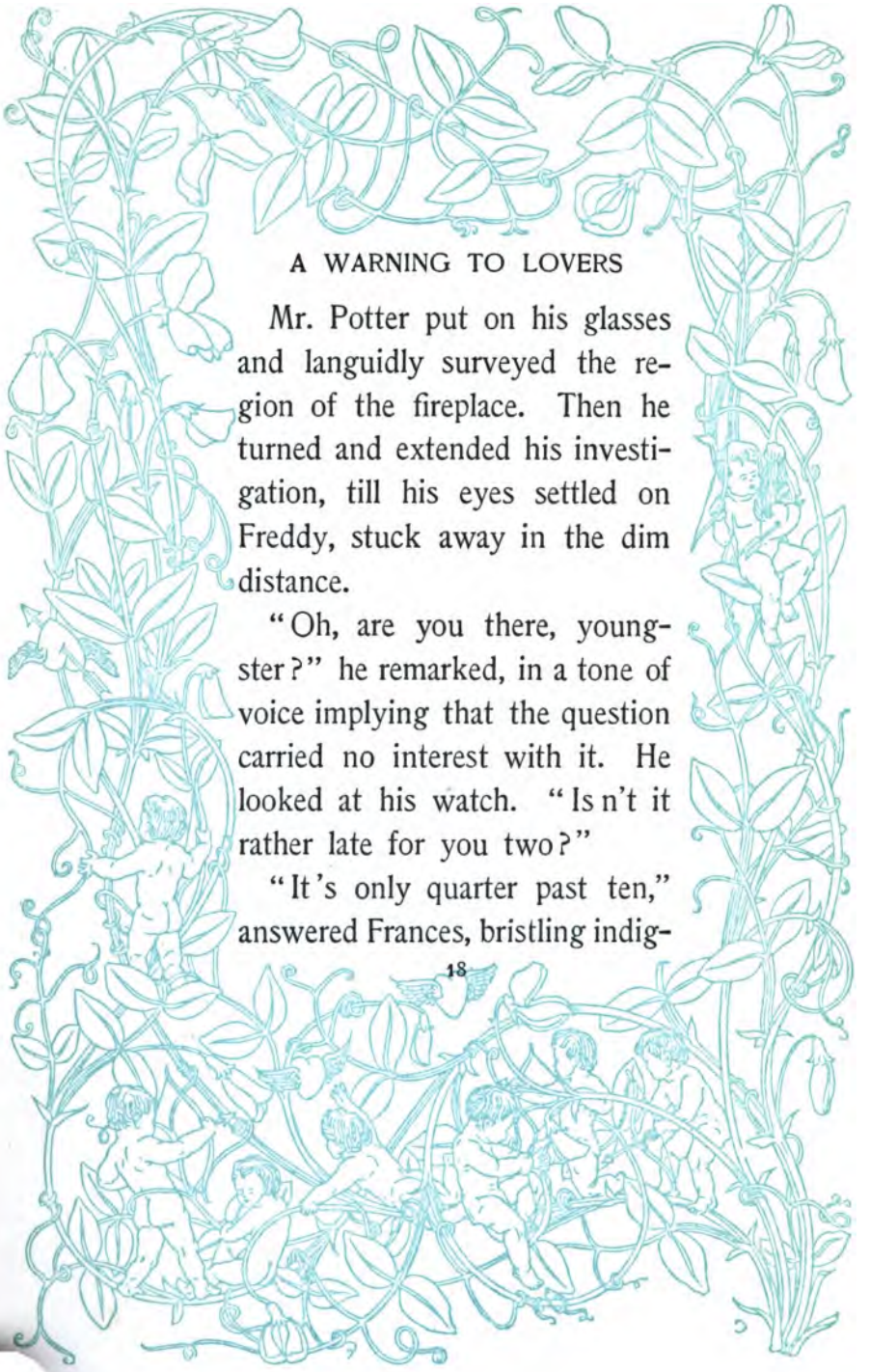
Both had arisen from the sofa, and Freddy looked about in a very badly perplexed condition. He was quite willing, but about what was he to be quick?

"Sit down in that chair," whispered the girl, pointing to one at a more than proper distance, and Freddy sprinted for it, and sat down. The girl resumed her seat on the little sofa, and putting her hands in a demure position, rather contradictory to

her quick breathing and flushed cheeks, began: "As you were saying, the De Reszke brothers were the only redeeming — Oh! Good evening, Mr. Potter."

"Good evening, Frances," responded a tall, rather slender, strong-featured man, attired in evening dress, who had leisurely strolled into the room, and who did not offer to go through the form of shaking hands. "Talking to the fire?"

"No. Freddy and I were chatting about the opera."



Mr. Potter put on his glasses and languidly surveyed the region of the fireplace. Then he turned and extended his investigation, till his eyes settled on Freddy, stuck away in the dim distance.

"Oh, are you there, youngster?" he remarked, in a tone of voice implying that the question carried no interest with it. He looked at his watch. "Is n't it rather late for you two?"

"It's only quarter past ten," answered Frances, bristling indig-

nantly. "And if it were twelve it would n't make any difference." To herself she said, "How I hate that man! Just because he 's thirty-four, he always treats us as if we were children; and the way he tramples on poor, dear Freddy is outrageous!"

"You don't seem to be very sociably inclined," said Mr. Potter. "From the distance between you I should think you two chicks had been quarrelling. Come, make it up."

"Not at all," cried Frances,

indignantly. "I never lose my temper; except when you are here."

"Is that the reason you have n't asked me to sit down?" asked Potter, smiling.

"Of course you are to sit down, if you want," exclaimed Frances. "Here." And she moved the four inches towards her end of the sofa that had not been occupied under the previous arrangement.

Mr. Potter seated himself leisurely in Freddy's old place, and

arranged one of the cushions to fit the small of his back. "I came to say good-bye to your mother," he explained, "and as I'm too busy to stop in to-morrow, I decided to wait. You youngsters need n't think it necessary to sit up to entertain me. Won't Freddy's mother be sending his nurse for him if he stays much later?"

"I'm so glad you are going to Europe," remarked Frances. "I hope you'll stay a long while."

Mr. Potter put his glasses on

again and looked at Frances calmly. "Hello!" he said mentally, "the kitten's learning how to hiss." Aloud he announced: "I shall be gone for only a month or two, — just the voyage and a change."

"What a pity!" responded Frances, bitingly.

"I thought you'd miss me," replied Mr. Potter, genially.

Frances gave an uneasy movement on the sofa, a cross between an angry shake of the shoulders and a bounce.

"'Won't Freddy's mother be sending his nurse for him if he stays much later?'"

"Where are you going?" questioned Freddy at this point, feeling that as a grown man he must bear his part of the chat.

"Look here, littleun," said Mr. Potter, "if you expect me to talk to you back there, you—" At this point he suddenly ceased speaking, as if something more interesting than his unfinished remark had occurred to him.

"Freddy found it too warm by the fire," explained Frances, hastily, guilty at heart, if to out-

ward appearance brazen. But Mr. Potter did not hear what she said, and sat looking into the fire with a suddenly serious look, which nevertheless had a laugh not very far underneath.

After quite a pause, Frances said: "How entertaining you are!"

"Yes," assented Mr. Potter, coming back from his thoughts; "I always enjoy myself, and I find that other people do the same." Then he again relapsed into meditation.

"Is n't he just as horrid as can be?" raged Frances, inwardly. "He believes just because some women think him clever, and because men like him, and because he's a good business man, and because mama's always praising him to his face, as she would any one who was papa's partner, that he is perfect. And no matter how you try to snub him, he is so conceited that he won't see it. Horrid old thing!" Aloud she asked, "What are you thinking about?"

Mr. Potter laughed. "That's a great secret," he asserted.

*
* *

An hour later, Mr. Potter was seated in a library, smoking, with a glass of seltzer — and something else — at his elbow. Opposite to him sat a man of perhaps twice his years, equally equipped with a cigar and seltzer — and something else.

"Well," remarked the senior, "I think if we can get the whole issue at 82½ and place them at

87 and accrued interest, we had better do it."

"That's settled then," agreed Mr. Potter. "Now, is there anything else? I don't want to have cablegrams following me, since I'm going for a rest."

"No," replied the other. "I know I shall want my partner's advice often enough, but I'll get on without you. Take a rest. You can afford it. There's nothing else."

"Then if you are through with business, I want to speak

to you of Frances," said Mr. Potter.

Mr. De Witt turned and looked at Mr. Potter quickly. "What about?"

"Do you know that that girl's grown up, and we none of us have realised it?"

"Well?"

"And do you know that she has seen next to no people,—that her morning ride, her studies, and her afternoon drive with her mother are the only events of her day?"

"Well?"

"And that her summers, off in that solitary country house of yours, with never a bit of company but Freddy De Witt and myself, are horribly dull and monotonous?"

"Well?"

"And that to kill time she reads a great many more novels than is good for any one?"

"Come, come, Champney, what are you driving at?"

"One more question. Mrs. De Witt and you are dining out

almost nightly. What do you suppose Frances does evenings?"

"Does? Plays a bit, and reads a bit, and goes to bed like a good child."

"But I tell you she isn't a child any longer, so you can't expect her to behave like one. It dawned upon me this evening, and the quicker it dawns upon you the better."

"Why?"

"Do you want her to make a fool of herself over Freddy?"

"Freddy!"

"Yes, Freddy."

"Ridiculous! Impossible!"

"Because they are a long way towards it, and if you want to end it, you'll have to use drastic measures."

"Her own cousin, and only eighteen! I never heard of such folly."

"But I tell you those two think they are in love with each other, and if you don't do something, they'll really become so before long. Thinking a thing is two-thirds of the way to

doing it, as is shown by the mind cure."

"I'll put an end to it at once," growled Mr. De Witt. "Never heard of such nonsense."

"And how will you end it?" inquired Mr. Potter, smiling a little.

"End it? Tell them to stop their foolishness. Send him about his business."

"I thought that would probably be your way. Don't you think it would be better to get an injunction from the courts?"

"What good would an injunction do?" asked Mr. De Witt, crossly.

"Just as much good as your method. You can no more stop boys' and girls' love by calling it foolishness than the courts can. If you do as you propose, you 'll probably have a runaway match, or some other awful bit of folly."

"Well, what can I do?"

"The best thing is to pack your trunks and travel a bit. That will give her something else to think

about, and she 'll forget all about the little chap."

"But I can't leave the business."

"The business will run itself. Or, if it won't, what 's a year's profits compared to your only daughter's life-happiness?"

"But the bonds?"

"Don't bid on them."

"I can't go. I can't leave my business. Why, I have n't been away from it for more than a week in forty years."

"All the more reason for going now."

"I have it. Her mother and she shall sail with you."

"Oh, get out!" ejaculated Champney, "I'm going for a rest." Mr. Potter had been the slave for many years of two selfish sisters and a whining mother, — a mother who loved to whine, — and womankind meant to him an absolute and entire nuisance.

"That's it," said the senior partner, regardless of this protest. "You arrange to stay for six months instead of two. I'll do your work gladly."

"I can't," groaned Potter.

"Come, Champney," wheedled the elder, "you say yourself that my little girl's life-happiness depends on her going. For my sake! Come! I did a good turn for you — or at least you've always said I did — in the partnership. Now do one for me."

Potter sighed. He was used to being martyrised where women were concerned and had not learned how to resist. "Well, if you say so. But I'll have to

leave them there. Two months is my limit."

"All right," assented the senior, gleefully.

"Perhaps," thought Potter, "perhaps they won't be able to pack in time." And the idea seemed to please him.

For half an hour longer they chatted, and then Potter rose.

"Tell me, Champney," inquired the senior, "how did you find out about it?"

"Oh," laughed Champney, "that's telling."

The next day there was woe in Israel. Mr. De Witt was cross over the "children's folly," as he called it. Mrs. De Witt was deeply insulted at such sudden and peremptory marching orders. "Men are so thoughtless," she groaned; "as if one could be ready to go on a day's notice!" Champney was blue over the spoiling of his trip. Freddy, when he heard the news, was the picture of helplessness and misery, and only added to the friction by coming round and getting in

everybody's way, in the rush of the packing. As for Frances, she dropped many a secret tear into the trunks as her belongings were bestowed therein. Never, it seemed to her, had true love been so crossed.

"I know Mr. Potter is at the bottom of it." (Frances was not alluding to the trunk before which she knelt.) "He 's always doing mean things, yet he never will acknowledge them. He won't even pay me the respect of denying them." Frances slapped a

shawl she was packing, viciously. "To think of having to travel with him! He won't even look at me. No. He does n't even pay me the compliment of looking at me. I don't believe he's even noticed my eyes and eyelashes." Frances gazed into a hand-glass she was about to place in the trunk, and seemed less cross for a moment after the scrutiny. "He 's just as snubby as he can be. I hate snubby people, and I 'll be just as snubby to him as I know how. I 'll—"

A WARNING TO LOVERS

"Good afternoon, Frances," interrupted a voice, which made that young lady nearly jump into the trunk she was bending over. "I came up to see if I could do anything for you or your mother, and she sent me in to ask you."

Frances was rather flushed, but that may have been due to the stooping position. "I don't think of anything," she answered.

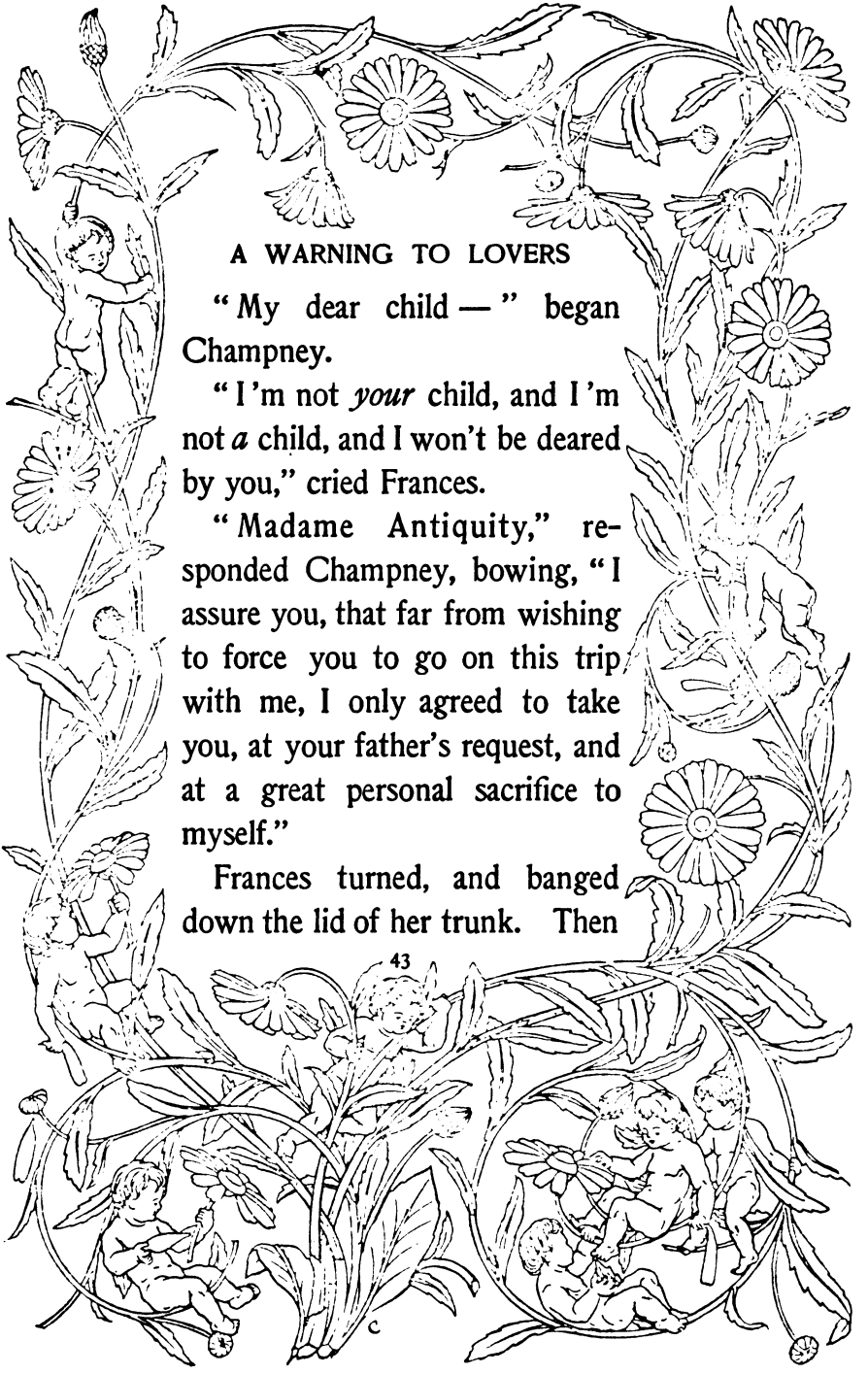
"I've had some chairs sent on board, and laid in novels and smoked glasses and puzzles; and

oysters, and game, and fruit, and butter," said Champney, with a suggestion of weariness, "and I don't think of anything else. If you can suggest something more, I 'll get it."

"I don't know— Yes. You might change your mind and let us stay at home," snapped Frances.

"Don't blame me for that," laughed Champney. "That 's your father's doings."

"I know you were at the bottom of it," charged Frances.



A WARNING TO LOVERS

"My dear child —" began Champney.

"I'm not *your* child, and I'm not *a* child, and I won't be deared by you," cried Frances.

"Madame Antiquity," responded Champney, bowing, "I assure you, that far from wishing to force you to go on this trip with me, I only agreed to take you, at your father's request, and at a great personal sacrifice to myself."

Frances turned, and banged down the lid of her trunk. Then

she banged it again, to get the hasp to fit. Then she picked up a pair of discarded boots and threw them across the room, hitting Freddy, who entered at that moment.

"Why, sweetness!" gasped Freddy, who did not see Champney.

"Oh, go away," cried Frances, blushing. "Don't bother me! Can't you see I'm too busy to waste time now?"

And to illustrate the callousness of man to true love, it is regrettable to state that Champ-

"'I'm not a child, and I won't be deared by you'"

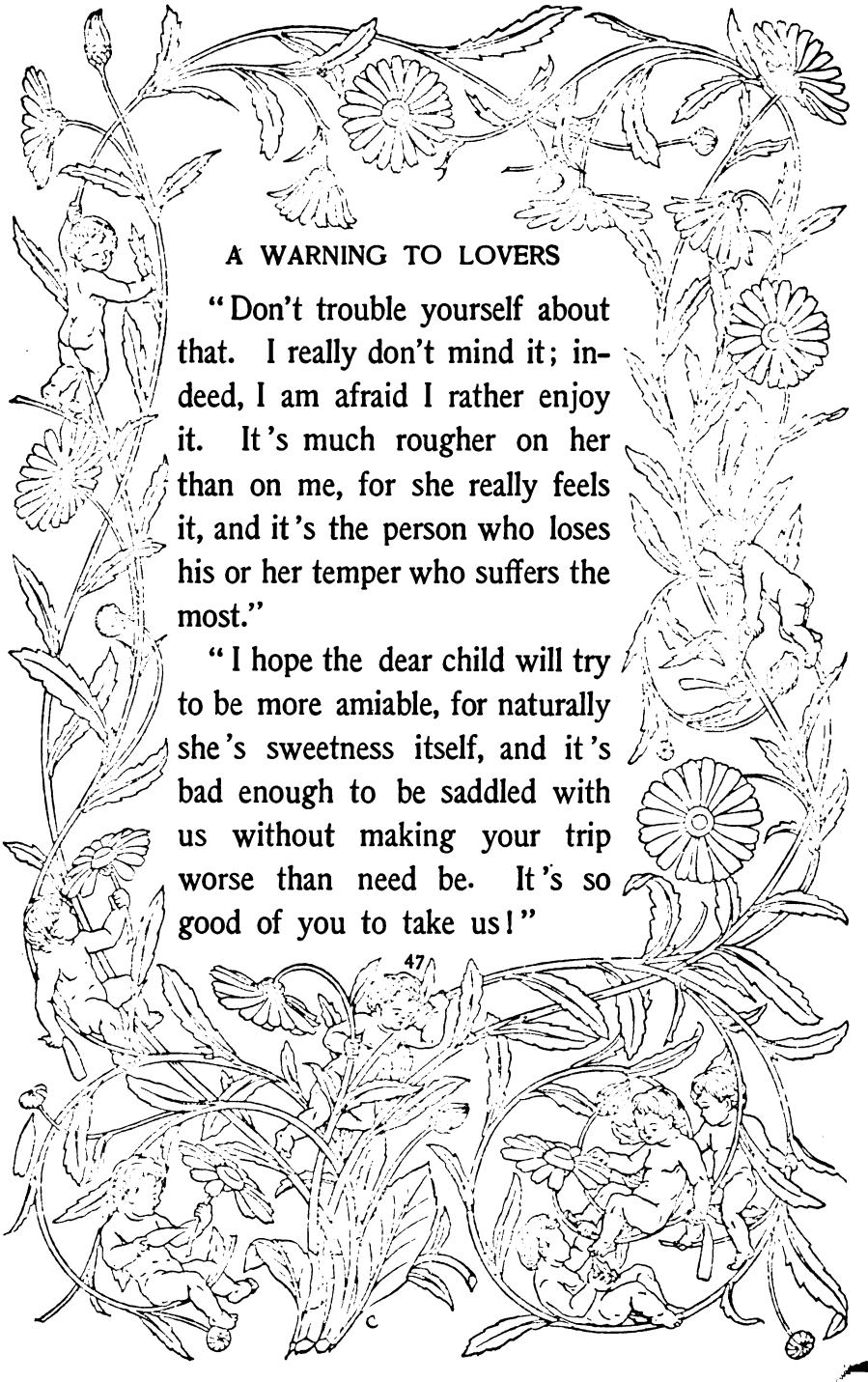
MRU

ney slipped out of the door at this point, with an expression of great muscular tension about his mouth, and no sooner was he in the hall than the brute reeled up against the wall and, leaning there, laughed to a sinful degree.

Then he walked to the end of the hall, and entering a room, also cluttered with trunks, he sat upon one of them and retold the scene to the woman packing. "I never saw anything so delicious in its way," he laughed. "I really believe the medicine's begun

to work already. But do you know, Frances promises to be a tremendous beauty. Just now, when her cheeks and eyes were blazing so, she was simply glorious to look at." Which shows that Champney's cool, disregarding manner was not more than skin deep, and that unlimited possibilities lay underneath. Perhaps, too, another potion was beginning to work.

"I'm sorry she is so childish with you, Champney," said Mrs. De Witt.



A WARNING TO LOVERS

"Don't trouble yourself about that. I really don't mind it; indeed, I am afraid I rather enjoy it. It's much rougher on her than on me, for she really feels it, and it's the person who loses his or her temper who suffers the most."

"I hope the dear child will try to be more amiable, for naturally she's sweetness itself, and it's bad enough to be saddled with us without making your trip worse than need be. It's so good of you to take us!"

"Dear lady," answered Champney, tenderly, "it's nothing but a little set-off against your years of goodness to me. You have really given me a second home; nothing I can ever do will make me other than your debtor."

"It's nice to hear you say so, Champney," said Mrs. De Witt, affectionately. "I have always felt as if you were a son of mine."

"Then don't talk to me about my goodness in taking you."

"But it is good of you."

"I don't think Freddy and Frances think so."

"Oh, Champney! Tell me, how did you find out their foolishness?"

"That is a secret," chuckled Champney, "that goes with me to the grave."

* * *

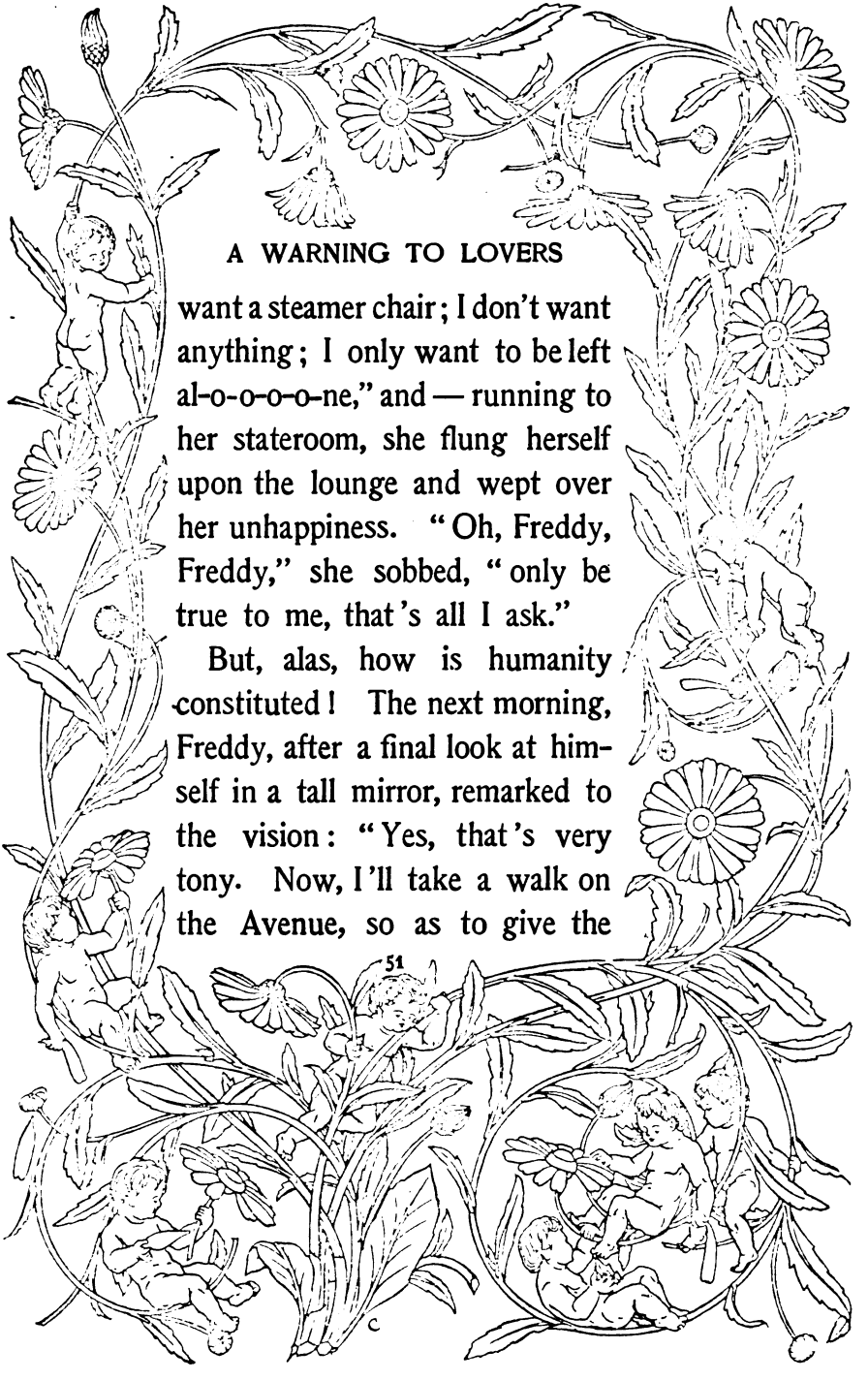
Nor was it any better for Cupid the next day at the steamer. The evil genius of the little god, in the shape of Potter, persisted in following Frances about, and not a moment did she or Freddy find

to swear constancy or anything else to each other. Only a hand squeeze, while the whistle was blowing "all ashore," did they get to feed their hearts upon during the separation.

Freddy went home, and, going to his room, flung himself on his bed, and moaned, and bit the pillow, and felt he was feeling great thoughts, and thought he was having great feelings.

And the little lady?

"No," she declared, "I don't want to walk with you; I don't



want a steamer chair; I don't want anything; I only want to be left al-o-o-o-o-ne," and — running to her stateroom, she flung herself upon the lounge and wept over her unhappiness. "Oh, Freddy, Freddy," she sobbed, "only be true to me, that's all I ask."

But, alas, how is humanity constituted! The next morning, Freddy, after a final look at himself in a tall mirror, remarked to the vision: "Yes, that's very tony. Now, I'll take a walk on the Avenue, so as to give the

girls a treat." As for Frances, after an hour's rapid walk with Champney in the crisp, sunny air, she came down to the breakfast-table, and said: "Yes, steward, I 'll begin with fruit and oatmeal, and then I 'll have chocolate, and beefsteak, and an omelette, and fried potatoes, and hot rolls, and marmalade. Oh! And, steward, do you have griddle cakes?"

Thus, despite their mutual intentions, the thought of each other lessened daily, till even the

inevitable correspondence lost interest and flagged. Frances discovered that London, Paris, and the Riviera offered greater attractions than Freddy's witless and vapid "chronicle of small beer;" while Freddy found that listening to the conversation of a girl, present, was a far better way of spending time than reading the letters of a girl, absent. Finally, Frances found a letter at the bankers at Berne which ended the correspondence, — a letter over which she laughed so heartily

that Champney looked up from his own bundle of mail and asked, "What is it that 's so funny?"

"Freddy 's engaged to Kitty Maxwell," replied Frances.

"I don't think you ought to be so gleeful at other people's misfortunes," reproved Champney, laughing himself, however, while speaking, as if he, too, saw something humourous in the announcement.

"I—I was n't—I was laughing at something else," Frances told him.

"What?" asked Champney.

"A secret," replied Frances, blushing a little, even while laughing.

"Not from me?" urged Champney.

"Yes; I sha'n't even tell you. Not a person in the world will ever know it, and I 'm very glad," asserted Frances.

"I suspect I know it already," suggested Champney. "I am a great hand at finding out secrets. I have a patent method."

"What is that?" asked Frances.

"That, too, is a secret," laughed Champney.

*
* *

When next we meet any of our characters, they — or at least two of them — are toiling up a steep mountain path in the Bavarian Tyrol. Frances leads, for the way is narrow, and Champney follows. Conversation is at a marked discount; but whether this is due to the natural incompatibility of the two, or merely to the exertion of the climb, is unknown to history.

"She gets lovelier every day," finally remarked Champney.

Frances stopped, and turned. "What did you say?" she asked.

"I didn't speak," answered Champney.

"I'm sure you did," said Frances.

"No," denied Champney, "I was merely thinking."

"You did say something, I'm sure," responded Frances, turning, and resuming the climb.

Another five minutes brought them to the top of a little plateau

set in between two ranges of mountains, and dividing two lakes, famous the world over. Even after the couple reached their destination, however, they stood silent for a minute. Then Frances exclaimed, —

"Is n't it glorious?"

"Lovely," assented Champney, emphatically, but staring all the time at Frances, making it doubtful of what he was speaking.

Frances, being quite conscious of this gaze, looked all the harder

at the view. "The mountains shut in so grandly!" she remarked, after a pause.

"Such perfect solitude!" said Champney, enthusiastically.

"Yes," assented Frances, with apparent reluctance in admitting the fact. "But I suppose we must be going down again; mama will be lonely."

Champney calmly seated himself on a stone, unstrung his field-glass, and surveyed through it the edge of the lake, far below them. "Your mother," he an-

nounced, "is sitting on the rug, just where we left her. Her back is against the tree, and she is pretending to read. But she's doing nothing of the kind. She is taking a nap on the sly. Surely you don't want to disturb her?"

"It must be nearly luncheon time."

"The boatmen have n't even begun to unpack yet. Johann is just taking the Vöslauer out of the boat, to cool it in the lake. They won't be ready for half an an hour."

Frances began to look a little worried. There was a dangerous persistence in this evident desire to remain on the alp. "I think I'll go down, anyway," she said.

"You must n't do that," begged Champney, laying the field-glass on the rock.

"Why not?" demanded Frances.

"Because I have something to say to you," said Champney.

Silence and apparent interest in the view on the part of Frances.

"Do you know," asked Champ-

ney, "that I planned to be away for only two months?"

"Yes."

"And that I have been over here more than eight?"

"Oh, not so long as that," denied Frances.

"Eight months and four days."

"How quickly the time has gone!"

"But it has gone, and that's the trouble. I have decided that I *must* go back in September."

Frances hesitated, and then said

bravely, "We shall be very sorry to have you go."

"That makes it all the harder," groaned Champney, rising and joining Frances. "In fact, I hate so to leave you" ("you" can be plural or singular) "over here that — that I want you to go back with me. Will you?"

"Why, that is for mama and papa to settle," remarked Frances, artfully dodging the question, though perfectly understanding it.

"This isn't to be settled by fathers and mothers. My dar—

my — I want you to go — because you have become so dear to me. I want to tell you — to tell you how I have grown to love you in these months. How happy you can make me by a single word. I — you — once you told me you were not 'my dear child.' Oh, Frances, won't you be my dearest love?"

"If you want me to be," acceded Frances.

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* *

One of the simplest laws of natural philosophy is that a

thing descends more easily than it ascends. Yet it took those two over four times longer to come down than it had taken them to go up, — which proves that love is superior to all the laws of gravity; though it is not meant to suggest by this that it has aught to do with levity. From among a variety of topics with which they beguiled this slow descent the following sentences are selected:

"I can't believe it yet," marvelled Champney. "It does n't

seem as if our happiness could have depended on such a small chance."

"What chance?"

"Why — on that evening. When I found your mother was n't in, I half turned away, but after hesitating, decided to wait. And then, when I found you two in the morning-room, I decided that I would leave you, and go and read in the library. I was just about to say so, when you told me to sit down by you on the sofa. That led to our coming off

"It took those two over four times longer to come down than it had taken them to go up"

here together, and really finding out about each other. Of course that was equivalent to my falling desperately in love."

"But you could have done that at home," laughed Frances, merrily.

"No, I should have come off here, and some other man would have won you."

"Champney! I never could love any one but you."

Champney swallowed the absurd statement rapturously. "That's just like the angel that you are," he declared.

"But I knew you had something to do with our coming," asserted Frances, "though you did deny it."

"No; like a consummate donkey, I did n't want to be bothered with you. Conceive of it, dear one, that I could ever think you a bother!"

"You did n't know me," laughed Frances, happily, and with no intention of vanity.

"No, I should think not. I wanted your father to take you. But I shall never want

any one else to do that in the future."

"But why did you want me to go to Europe, if it was n't to be with me?"

"Why — um — because, dear one, I saw a little girl that night who was longing so for love that she was accepting a cheap and flashy counterfeit in its stead. I did n't want her to waste a real heart on such an apology for a man, and so I interfered."

"But how did you know?" cried Frances, looking bewildered.

"We had only just—you could'nt have known it then?"

"Yes."

"How?"

Champney laughed as he replied: "That's telling."

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And now, another leap, please, back to that fireplace, and sofa, again occupied by two — but not the same two — or, at least, only half the same.

"Well," groaned Champney, "I suppose I ought to be going, for you must look your prettiest

to-morrow, otherwise malicious people will say it 's a match arranged for the business."

"Let them," laughed Frances. "By the way, how have you arranged about that? You are such a good business man, and papa and mama are so delighted, that I know you have the best of it."

"Of course I have. And she's sitting beside me now. But nothing mercenary to-night, Madame," ordered Champney. "Cupid, not cupidity."

"Well, Champney, dear, at

least do tell me how you found out about — about —" Frances stopped there.

"Never," persisted Champney, nestling back on the sofa and laughing.

"I don't think it's nice for a man to have secrets from his wife," reproved Frances, taking an eminently feminine view of man's knowledge.

"That is to be," corrected Champney.

"Will you tell me — after to-morrow?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"It's too good to be told."

"Ah, Champney!" And a small hand strayed round his neck, and rested lightly against his cheek. Champney looked very contented.

"Please, dear." And a pair of lips came dangerously close to his own.

Champney groaned a satisfied groan. "Well," he began, "do you remember when I came in the evening before we sailed, how Freddy was sitting over there,

and you were sitting just where you are?"

"Yes."

"And how you let me sit down here, just where I am?"

"Yes."

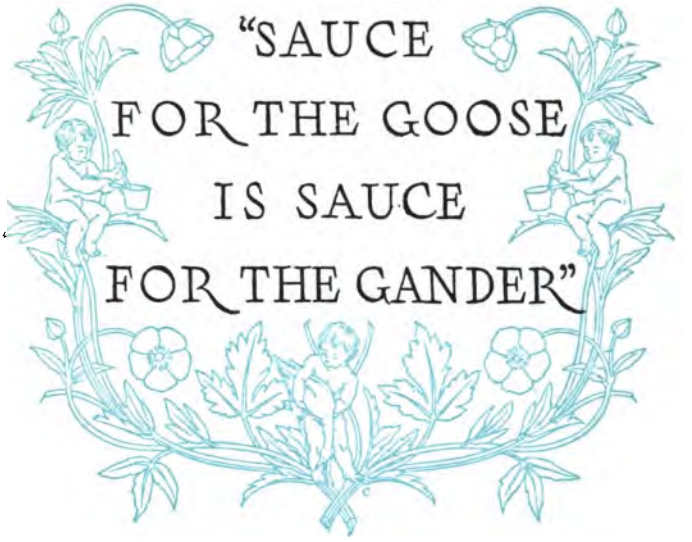
"And how I chatted for a moment and then suddenly became silent?"

"Yes."

"That was when I discovered it."

"How?"

"I found that the seat I was sitting in was *warm!*"


"SAUCE
FOR THE GOOSE
IS SAUCE
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"SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE IS SAUCE FOR THE GANDER"

"OH, my dear!" cried her mother. "I hope you have properly considered? He is charming, of course, but—well—he is such a club habitué."

"What? Well, well!" exclaimed her father. "Bless me, Meg, I had no idea— Give me

a kiss, if you have any to spare for your old dad now. Why, of course, I consent, if you care for him. Only tell Mr. Tyler I hear he spends too much time at his clubs."

"Margaret! How nice!" ejaculated her sister. "I've liked him from the start, and hoped — people said he was too fond of his club ever to care to marry, and so I thought — but now it's all right."

"I knew he meant biz," asserted her brother, "the moment he

began to keep away from the club, and put in so much time with you."

"I cannot tell you, my dearest Margaret (if I may call you that?)" wrote his mother, "how happy I am over what my dear boy has just told me. The luxury and ease of club life are now so great that I had almost feared Harry could not be weaned from them. But since he has chosen such a dear, beautiful, and clever girl, my worst anxiety is over."

"You are indeed to be con-

gratulated, niece," declared her aunt. "He is a most eligible *parti* — good looks, position, and wealth. If you can only keep him away from his clubs, I am confident you will be a very happy and domestic couple."

"I have been certain of it for weeks," her dearest feminine friend assured her. "There is n't a man I would rather have had you take, for he is so much at his club that I shall still see something of you."

"Er, Miss Brewster," said one

of her rejected lovers, "let me offer you my best wishes. At the club we all swear by Harry, and we actually think of going into mourning over the loss. Er, the fellows are laying bets as to whether we shall ever see him there again. The odds are six to one on the club, — but the fellows don't know you, you know."

"I want to offer you my heartiest congratulations," gushed the girl who had tried for him. "Mr. Tyler has always been one of my best friends, and I am sure you

will be very happy. He is n't, of course, very fond of women's society, but — Have you asked him to resign from his clubs?"

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"Don't you want to sit down, Harry?" asked Margaret, making room on the little sofa beside the fire.

The young couple had enjoyed four months of ecstatic travel, thirty days of chaos while they settled their household gods, and then a recurring Indian-summer honeymoon of two months in

front of their own fireside in the charmingly cosey library where the above remark was made. Upon this particular evening, however, Harry, in following his wife from the dining-room, took neither his customary seat beside his wife on the sofa nor lighted a cigar. On the contrary, he stood leaning against the mantel with anything but an expression or attitude of ease, and, noting this, Margaret had asked her question.

"Not to-night, dear," said

Harry. "The truth is — well — I met Parmlee on my way up town, and I — that is — he asked me to come round to the club this evening — and, well — I didn't like to disappoint him. And then, a fellow mustn't stag— that is — don't you think, my darling, that it's a mistake for married people to see too much of each other — and — "

"Oh, Harry!" cried Margaret, interrupting and rising. "You said you never could have enough — "

"And I can't, dearest," interrupted Harry, hurriedly. "But you know — Well — can't you — "

"I feel as if it were the beginning of the end," said Margaret, wildly.

"Now, my darling," pleaded Harry, "do be reasonable. You know — There, don't cry. I won't go. Sit down here and let me tell you how much I love you."

This occupied some time, but the clock never told on them, so it is impossible to say just how long. Presently Margaret said:

"Harry, did you really want to — to leave me?"

"Not a bit," lied Harry. "It was only to keep my word to Parmlee."

"I suppose it's too late now?" questioned Margaret, hopefully.

"Late? Oh, no! Fun's just beginning. But I'm going to stay with you, sweetheart."

There was a moment's silence, and then Margaret said: "If you want to go, I want you to do it, Harry."

"Well," responded Harry, rising, "if you insist, dearest."

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"This occupied some time, but the clock never told on them"

"I do," assented Margaret, in the most faint-hearted of voices.

"That's a darling!" said her husband. "It's half-past nine, so you'll only have a few minutes of loneliness before you go to bed."

"I sha'n't go to bed, Harry," sighed Margaret, dolefully.

"Why, my darling," protested Harry, a little irritably, "you don't want to make me miserable thinking of you as here by yourself. Please be reasonable and don't sit up for me. Leave

me free to come home when I want."

"Very well, Harry," acceded Margaret, dutifully, "if you insist, I won't wait for your return."

Harry took the charming face in his hands, and kissed each eyelid, and then the lips. "I don't deserve such an angel," he asserted, his conscience pricking him, "and — Oh, hang Parmlee!" he growled, as her eyes, a little misty, looked up into his own. However, she belonged to him, and there were plenty of

evenings, and—well— "Good-night, my treasure," he ended.

***

Margaret remained standing where Harry had left her until she heard the front door close; then she collapsed on the sofa and softly sobbed her sense of desertion and grief into the pillow. The warnings of her family and friends recurred to her, and added to the pain of the moment a direful dread of the future. Not knowing that most bachelors are regular club men merely because

it is the nearest approach to home life they can attain, she dwelt on his having been apparently wedded to these comforters of men, before marriage, and inferred a return to his former daily frequenting of them.

Her grief was keen enough to prevent her from noticing that the front door was presently opened, and not till she heard a faint cough in the room did she raise her head from the pillow. It was to find a servant with his back turned to the sofa, occupied,

apparently, in setting a chair in a position entirely unsuited to it,—a proceeding he made far more noisy than became a well-trained butler, and which he accompanied with two more coughs.

Hurriedly wiping her eyes, Margaret asked, "What is it, Craig?"

With his eyes carefully focussed to see everything but his mistress's face, the man came forward and held out his tray.

Almost mechanically she took the card upon it, and after a mere

glance she directed, — "Say that Mrs. Tyler is not receiving this evening, and begs to be excused."

Left alone once more, the young wife sat down upon a stool near the fire, and looked into the blaze, idly twirling the card. "I wonder," she soliloquised presently, "if he would have done the same." Again she lapsed into meditation, for a few minutes; then suddenly she sat up straight, with an air of sudden interest which was clearly derived from her own thoughts. A moment

later, she gave a short, hesitating laugh. "If I only dared! I wonder if he would? Men are—" she said disconnectedly; but even as she spoke her face softened. "Poor dear!" she murmured tenderly. Yet the words of pity melted into another laugh, and this time merriment and not guilt was the dominant note. Springing to her feet with vivacity, she sped into the hall, and placed the card on the tray, and that in turn conspicuously on the hatrack. A second action con-

sisted in turning on all the electric lights of the chandelier. This done, she touched the bell.

"You may close the house, Craig," she ordered, when the servant responded to the summons, "but as Mr. Tyler has gone to his club, I wish you to leave these lights just as they are. I prefer that he should not come home to a darkened house, so don't turn out one." Giving one last glance, half merry and half guilty, at the bit of pasteboard put in so prominent a position,

Margaret lightly tripped upstairs, humming something to herself.

*
* *

Meantime Harry had wended his way to the club.

"Hello, Tyler!" said the man his wife had refused. "Don't mean to say you've actually ceased to be one of the 'submerged tenth'? How and where is your superior moiety?"

"When I left Mrs. Tyler before her fire, ten minutes ago, she was very well."

"By George, if I had as clever

and pretty a wife I don't think I should dare to leave her alone. I should be afraid of the other men."

Harry turned away to hide his frown, but as he went towards the door of the billiard room, rejoined: "Perhaps it would n't be safe with *your* wife." To himself he carolled gleefully: "That cuts both ways."

"But you are not afraid, I understand," called the man, irritatingly, "so I take it you won't mind if I drop round there for a few moments this evening, eh?"

"Certainly not," responded Harry, suavely, but gritting his teeth. "Hang the fellow," he muttered. "How do such cads ever get into decent clubs? As if Margaret's refusing him twice was n't enough to make him understand that she does n't want him round!"

Tyler's anger was quickly forgotten in the warm reception his cronies gave him, and a tumbler of "unsweetened" and a cue quickly made him forget both the incident and the passing hours.

Not till the marker notified the players that the time limit had come did he wake to the fact that it was two o'clock.

With a sense of guilt the husband hurried home. In the hallway, as he took off hat and coat, he noticed the card, and picked it up. "So he did come," he growled, with a frown. "I hope Meg had gone to bed before he got here. Not, of course, that it really matters," he went on. "She told me she never could endure him, so he's welcome to

call as often as he likes to be snubbed." To prove how little he cared, the husband crushed the card viciously, and tossed it on the floor.

The light in Margaret's room was burning low, Harry noticed when he had ascended the stairs, and, peeping in, he saw that she was sleeping peacefully. Entering quietly, he looked at her for a moment, thinking with a little pang that he had given her pain. "You don't deserve such an angel," he said aloud. "See how

she has done just what you asked her to do, with never a word of — There is n't another woman who would have taken it so sweetly. You 're an ass! And for what? Four hours of — of nothing, when I might have been with her." He leaned down to very softly kiss a stray curl, and went towards his own room, while saying: "How pretty and dainty she is! She is worth all the clubs in the world!" What was more, for a minute he believed it.

The moment Harry was gone

Margaret opened her eyes very wide, rose softly, and looked at the clock. Then she went back to bed, smiling demurely.

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The next morning, when Harry entered the breakfast room a little late, he was received with a kiss, and no word of reproach. Margaret chatted over the meal in her usual entertaining, happy mood, telling him the news she had already extracted from the morning's paper.

"She's too clever ever to nag

a man," thought Harry, and assured that he was not to be taken to task, he became equally amiable, and told her whom he had seen at the club, and of his score.

"I'm glad you had such a pleasant evening!" said Margaret, sweetly. "I hope you did n't stay so late as to tire yourself."

"I did n't notice the time," fibbed Harry, "but probably I was in by twelve."

"Oh, no, dear," said Margaret, pleasantly, "for I did n't get home

till after one myself, and you were n't back then."

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Twenty times Harry has tried to persuade his wife into acknowledging that she spoke in jest, but Margaret only looks at him with wideopen, questioning eyes, as innocent as a child's. Her husband firmly believes that she went to bed ten minutes after he left the house, and always ends his unsuccessful attempts to get her to confess the fact by taking Margaret in his arms and telling

her of his belief. This faith his wife rewards with a tender kiss, but only a kiss, and still maintains her demure silence.

Harry spends no more evenings at the club, and every woman who knows him holds him up to other men as an ideal married Benedick.